



Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc.
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Good Morning distinguished members of the [State of Connecticut Assembly of Appropriations/ Judicial Sub-Committee](#): Honorable Toni Walker, State Rep, New Haven, Paul Formica, State Senator, East Lyme and, Cathy Ostin, Norwich, Connecticut

My name is Germano A. Kimbro, I am resident of New Haven. I am one of 3 Program Coordinators / Case Managers for the Warren A. Kimbro Reentry Project (WKRK). A demonstration grant funded by Department of Justice (DOJ) with collaborative partnerships with The Connecticut Department of Corrections (DOC), City of New Haven, and 3 community based organizations; Easter Seal Goodwill (ESGI), Inc., Project MORE Inc.(PMI), and Community Action Agency of New Haven Inc(CAANH). Our goal is to reduce the prison recidivism rate by 50% over the next 5 years. In addition, we are managing a caseload of 70-90 formerly incarcerated men and women over the next 3 three years. Connecticut is on track to producing a model to be replicated in other states, and across the country. Moreover, this is our opportunity for the State of Connecticut to be viewed as a true leader in overdue justice reform. Reentry programs and services make sense, it is the right thing to do; we are at a pivotal point and should be asking how we can provide additional resources and support to secure our success.

I strongly oppose the proposed cut of \$1 million dollars to reentry services in our budget. Twenty-five years ago, I was someone who had been incarcerated on 3 separate occasions over a 15 years period of time. I believe that had a reentry program been in place, my story would read very differently. The \$40, 000 a year spent for 12 years could have been \$ 5,000-10,000 investment in community based reentry programming. Our tax dollars in DOC have not been spent in the most efficient and responsible way over the past thirty-five years. Incarceration as is, in its current state of existence has created more harm than good. A great majority of our prisoners are non-violent drug offenders, who with proper supervision and support could be productive members of our communities. We cannot afford to continue treating our problems with the same mindset in which they were created. We are asking that you keep in mind that reentry funding is a small fraction of what we have spent building too many prison and over incarcerating are citizens.

Over the past 17-20 years I have worked with former Rep. Bill Dyson, and the late John S. Martinez to address racial ethical disparities in incarceration. Changes in these areas has taken place slowly, however, we have managed to make progress. Prisons are a part of a system that is rooted in injustice and impacts us all; disproportionately, affect poor minority families. Progress has been a very and we have just began to make significant progress. Nevertheless, Connecticut is ahead of the curve in this area and cannot afford to turn back the clocks on this issue. The loss of one million dollars would certainly do just this, and at a critical time, a time when we are track to be a leader in the nation.

In recent times the cost of incarcerating someone in Connecticut has gone from \$45,000 -100,000 per year, from 4,000 to 20,000 prisoners. Over the past 20 years we have put drops in a bucket when we compare the dollars spent on reentry programming, community based treatment and DOC. The high rates of incarceration have not benefitted the communities where the problems have accrued; in fact it is quite the opposite. The benign neglect of our tax dollars has only worked to further destroy our communities. It is very obvious that these people do not matter until the faces begin to look like those of your community and household.

The Community Action Agency of New Haven offers pathways to prosperity to those in poverty in the Greater New Haven area through:

◆Service ◆Collaboration ◆Advocacy ◆Knowledge Generation



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We as a so-called leading nation have failed to treat those charged and convicted of crimes with basic dignity and respect. As we all know, America has policies that has created the world's highest rate of incarceration. These are policies and decisions that have failed us as a society, and will continue drag us down. Now is an opportunity to say more, do more and make a difference. We should be here proposing an increase in funding now that prisons in Connecticut are closing due to more offenders being released in the communities. We should be redirecting some of those resources that continue to be wasted on insidious ideas, as the need for a "super maximum" facility.

The communities of poverty, poor education limited housing, lack of employment opportunities are those that been severely damaged by incarceration and the same men, women and children that have been removed and will be returning to us. The proposed cuts to reentry funding will affect the communities' ability to be providing crucial services of need.

People who have been previously incarcerated / convicted of a crime live with a life sentence of unemployment, restricted housing and other basic human needs- even after paying their debts to society. Housing and employment continue to represent two immediate and basic needs for people coming back into the community following a period of incarceration This is a time that we should be opening up more opportunities for people to rebuild their lives. Not only do reentry programs and services give formerly incarcerated persons greater access to occupations and housing it enable them to support themselves and their families, everyone deserves to have the resources to take care of themselves and their families. We have known that reentry programs can assist with establishing housing; financial stability and be the bridge of a successful transition back into the community.

In closing, I would like to say that I am a proud member of Just Leadership USA (JLUSA). Our goal is cut the US prison population by 50 % by year 2030. You now have the opportunity to help us reach our goal. My testimony here today is connected to this national movement, this movement could use your support by allow fund for reentry program to remain as a necessary item in our state budget. We produce better results when we focus on the solution. All efforts that help to reduces recidivism are part of the solution.

The recidivism rate for people who receive reentry support after release is only 19%, compared to 32% for those who do not find housing and gainful employment. These dollars would work to reduce recidivism, utilize taxpayer dollars more efficiently, promote public safety and creates a stronger economy for the State of Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and attention in this matter.

Very truly yours,

Germano A. Kimbro, BS.

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